

EQUAL PAY DAY IN GERMANY

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DESCRIPTION OF THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE EQUAL PAY DAY CAMPAIGN IN GERMANY

BACKGROUND AND GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT OF GERMANY CONCERNING THE GENDER PAY GAP

Still, women in Germany on average earn 22 per cent less than their male colleagues. In terms of an EU-wide comparison, this puts Germany third from the bottom. Furthermore, there is still a clear divide between Western (24 per cent) and Eastern Germany (6 per cent).

The **adjusted** wage gap is calculated on the basis of the earnings of women and men with the same individual characteristics, i.e. comparison is made between women and men with the same educational status, working in the same occupations and sectors, and with the same form of employment like full-time, part-time, “mini-jobs” etc. The adjusted wage gap measures 7 per cent.

In accordance with the EU Commission, the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) embraces a **strategy for combating pay inequality, which addresses its major causes**. As various studies commissioned by the Ministry have found, there are three main causes of the gender pay gap:

- **Women are missing in certain professions, sectors and on the upper end of the career ladder:** The horizontal and vertical segregation of the labour market along gender lines continues to be a reality.
- Women **interrupt their careers** and **reduce their working time** for family reasons more frequently and for longer periods than men.
- Individual and collective **pay negotiations** have not yet succeeded in effectively overcoming the traditionally low evaluation of female-dominated professions.

As equality of pay is a **key indicator of equality between women and men, overcoming pay inequality** is a central concern of gender equality policy. The individual factors making up the three complexes of origins listed above are manifold and related to one another in a complex way. With regard to overcoming the different origins of pay inequality, the actors involved have different capacities. Thus in order to make progress, all individual measures must be brought together in a **strategic alliance**. The co-operation of all partners, i.e. political actors, social partners, employers, female employees and industry associations is crucial.

For Germany the second complex of origins – family related employment breaks and reductions in working time – is of special significance. One major task in this context is to



create favourable framework conditions supporting mothers and fathers in reconciling the needs of family and working life. Over the past few years, the Federal Government, with its family and gender equality policies, has taken very decisive action in this respect. The extension of day care facilities for children – in particular for the under three-year-olds – improved tax deductibility for child-care costs, the parental benefit as a compensation for wage losses and its ‘partner months’ are all measures, which facilitate the reconciliation of family and working life for women and men, and which support the equitable distribution of child-care duties between them.

To overcome the vertical and horizontal segregation, the Federal Government’s equal opportunities policy contributes significantly to broadening the choice of occupations and careers of both women and men, as well as improving their overall professional opportunities. In this context, diverse programmes with various partners have been implemented.

The third complex of origins is mainly concerned with how wages and salaries are determined and set. It deals with the issue of job evaluation within collective agreements and wage negotiations. In Germany, companies can investigate their situation in regard to equality using two different computer programmes: Logib-D for a structural analysis www.logib-d.de www.equal-pace.eu and EG-Check for analysing job evaluation systems www.eg-check.de. In addition, individuals can check and compare their wages using the Lohnspiegel www.lohnspiegel.de developed by the Hans-Böckler-Stiftung. Here, special focus is also laid upon women and their wage situations. Information is available on www.lohnspiegel.de/main/lohnspiegel-spezial/frauenlohnspiegel.

Over the past seven years, the Federal Government has paid increasing attention to the issue of pay inequality. However, the Gender Wage Gap remains relatively stable. Numerous initiatives encourage young women and men to open up their career paths, and thus, to overcome traditional divisions in the labour market. Here, the General Equal Treatment Act (*Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz* – AGG) offers opportunities for the judicial review of decisions on promotion and preferential treatment. However, enforcing the law is difficult, as generally speaking, the concerned woman fights alone.

EQUAL PAY DAY IN GERMANY

On 15 April 2008, Business and Professional Women (BPW) Germany organised the first Equal Pay Day in Germany, and in 2009, BPW International launched the worldwide campaign in New York. The campaign was endorsed by the German National Council of Women and numerous women’s associations. Its aim was to disseminate information on the gender pay gap and to encourage women to take the initiative and address the issue of unequal pay in a more proactive way. With the second Equal Pay Day on 20 March 2009, a National Action Alliance for Pay Equality was implemented based on the initiative of BPW for three years from 2009 to 2011, with financial, conceptual and research support of the BMFSFJ. Members at this time were the Federal Association of municipal offices for women and gender equality bodies (FOPH), the Federal Association of German Employers (BDA), the German Women’s Council (DF) and the Association of German Entrepreneurs (VdU). The Alliance was able to mobilise nationwide about 60,000 citizens and recorded approximately 180 activities in the first year. In 2010, already 259 activities in 173 towns and cities with at least 70,000 activists have been registered. These figures have yearly risen, and in 2013,



nationwide over 1,000 activities have been reported. Since overcoming the 1,000, we stopped counting the annual activities. Most of them report their actions for the day on the map we put in place on the website action platform,

As the National Alliance could only take unanimous decisions, the result was a lack of flexibility often due to the different attitudes, especially on the side of the employers. BMFSFJ and BPW, as the responsible partners, agreed on a new structure of cooperation for the on-going second phase of the project funding from 2011 to 2014. A steering committee was put in place, consisting next to BMFSFJ and BPW, of a representative of the National Working Group of Local Government Officers for Equal Opportunities (*Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Kommunalen Gleichstellungsbeauftragter – BAG*), the Trade Union ver.di and the Organisation of Women in Rural Areas (*Deutscher Landfrauenverband*).

For the phase 2014 to 2017, an advisory board was convened comprising of representatives of the BMFSFJ, Federation of German Trade Unions (DGB), DF, Social Association of Germany (SoVD), BAG, Federal Forum Men, Hans-Böckler-Foundation and the Institute for Work, Skills and Training. In addition, special partners in correspondence with the yearly focus theme are appointed. This year's partners are the Deutsche Telekom, oose and VR Leasing promoting transparent remuneration structures.

Since 2009, the date of the Equal Pay Day is calculated according to current figures of the Federal Office for statistics. **The Equal Pay Day symbolises the pay gap through a period of time – following the motto: money is time – time is money.** The nationwide joint Equal Pay Day enables a much more effective media work.

EQUAL PAY DAY OFFICE

The BPW Germany Equal Pay Day Office, funded by the BMFSFJ, opened its doors in September 2011. The Office has a variety of tasks: keeping the theme of Equal Pay on the political agenda throughout the year, handing out campaign material supporting the uniform occurrence of activities, such as red bags and flags with the printed label of EPD and offering guidance for events, advertising and providing information about the annual focus of the EPD – so called "EPD Toolkit". We further offer movies, power point presentations, flyers, various guidelines, drafts for invitations and press releases as well as other supporting tools. The EPD Office regularly updates the website and publishes the nationwide activities on an online map (*„Aktionslandkarte“*), which facilitates finding of activities in every corner of the country. Another task is the evaluation of the results, such as activities, number of press articles and the like.

FORUM EQUAL PAY DAY

The Forum Equal Pay Day is a congress series for opinion leaders with the aim to spread the yearly EPD topic nationwide, following a top-down strategy. In particular, action groups and women's organisations are addressed throughout Germany, to distribute the needed information for their activities on the street as well as to raise awareness on this respective issue.

After years of addressing the unadjusted pay gap a countermovement has evolved, which considers the procedure to be frivolous. Therefore, we believe it is necessary to explain the different proportions of the pay gap piece by piece, which we carry out with the help of major

topics. The priority theme of the year addresses one of the sources in a special way and shows the combined effect of multiple causes.

Three main forums were organised in preparation of the priority theme 2015 "Putting the cards on the table – How much do women and men earn?": an opening event in Berlin followed by two events in Düsseldorf and Frankfurt. In addition, forums are organised on demand. Video recordings were made and offered as tools for in-depth information or use in other events. In addition, these main lectures, supplemented by photos and other contributions, were combined in a print publication called EPD Journal 2014. 24,000 journals are going to be distributed to women's organisations, gender equality offices, media representatives and other interested parties in order to spread the word on the gender pay gap in Germany, its causes, implications and especially our focus theme on transparency.

ACTIVITIES ON EQUAL PAY DAY

To give all teams more freedom in the planning of their own Equal Pay Day Event, we have extended the promotion period. The action weeks begin on the international women's day (March 8) and last to the statistically calculated Equal Pay Day on March 20, 2015. A wide variety of actions takes place every year:

- Successful cooperation on national and regional level with equal opportunity commissioners, political parties, women's confederations, economic associations, trade unions, employers and companies;
- Valuable discussions of the annual priority theme on a high quality level;
- Extensive media coverage, especially on the Internet, TV and in print media;
- Merchandising goods are highly requested and sold, top seller: red bags and flags;
- Great demand for the annual Equal Pay Day Journal, which is perceived as a professional journal with expert approach on the priority theme, as well as the E%TRABLATT, the popular edition; and
- By hoisting the Equal Pay Day flags to city halls and other public buildings, a concerted action throughout Germany was realised.

PRIORITY THEME 2015

TRANSPARENCY

This year's focus theme "Putting the cards on the table – How much do women and men earn?" highlights the topic of transparency – or rather – a lack of transparency in pay negotiations and wage-setting. With this priority theme, we sensitise for transparent remuneration and job evaluation structures in companies. This encompasses:

- Comprehensible job evaluation structures;
- Disclosure of individual information in relation to wage and job classification; and
- Inclusion of all wage-related components, such as cash and non-cash benefits, as well as their distribution among male and female employees.

Transparent job evaluation and remuneration structures allow both men and women to assess their individual and call for appropriate job classification as well as present central mechanisms to close the gender pay gap.